



Banyule City Council

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Plan 2017 – 2021

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Council's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Plan outlines our commitment to and appreciation of Banyule's LGBTI communities. The Plan outlines how we work in partnership to support LGBTI communities. Banyule is proud of its diversity and believes that communities are better when all people, regardless of their background or identity are embraced and supported to participate and contribute.

The LGBTI Plan has used Banyule's Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework (IAEF) which identifies five goals for our diverse communities. The five goals are:

1. Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.
2. Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address service gaps.
3. Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved in community life.
4. Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities.
5. Advocate on behalf of and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.

The LGBTI Advisory Committee will provide Council with advice and information on inclusion, access and equity, issues facing the LGBTI communities and monitor the implementation of Council's LGBTI Plan 2017-2021.

LGBTI Plan 2017- 2021

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Introduction

Council's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Plan outlines our commitment to and appreciation of Banyule's LGBTI communities. The Plan outlines how we work in partnership to support LGBTI communities. Banyule is proud of its diversity and believes that communities are better when all people, regardless of their background or identity are embraced and supported to participate and contribute.

The terminology used to describe and identify members of the LGBTI communities is complex and ever shifting. For the purpose of consistency Council uses Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) throughout this plan. An expanded list of definitions may be found in Appendix 1, Terminology and Language.

Purpose of the Banyule LGBTI Plan

Banyule's LGBTI Plan 2017 – 2021 is Council's commitment to servicing the needs of our increasingly diverse population. Banyule City Council believes in the benefits of diversity and the rights of all people to be free from discrimination and have opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life.

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Local Government has a legislated role in providing opportunities for all to achieve maximum health and wellbeing. Banyule City Council acknowledges that the wellbeing of certain groups, including our LGBTI communities are impacted more than others and requires a greater level of attention.

The LGBTI Plan focuses attention on strategies to address the barriers faced by Banyule's LGBTI communities and seeks to create more opportunities for participation and involvement. These strategies aim to bring all people within Banyule together and to foster respect and acceptance. In this way, the Plan will benefit the whole community and conversely, it requires the participation of everyone in the community if it is to be successful.

The LGBTI Plan is one of four plans that are based on Council's Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework (IAEF). The other plans are our Disability Plan, Multicultural Plan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan. The IAEF expresses our commitment to our diverse communities and provides a framework to guide the way that we will work to promote and foster inclusion, access and equity.

Current Status

In 2014, Council adopted its first LGBTI Plan 2014 – 2017 using the IAEF. This led to the establishment of the Banyule LGBTI Advisory Committee which provides advice to Council on emerging issues and monitors the implementation of the Plan.

Achievements and Outputs from Previous Plan

The LGBTI Plan 2017 – 2021 builds on the achievements and outputs delivered over the past three years through Council's previous Plan in 2014.

Some of the outputs achieved by the 2014 – 2017 Plan include:

- Established the first LGBTI Advisory Committee
- Developed an Inclusive Language Guide to ensure our staff and services are getting the language right
- First event held to mark International Day Against Homophobia Biphobia and Transphobia (IDABOIT)
- Councillors, staff and community participated in the Pride March in St Kilda
- Council's Commonwealth Home Support Service became only the eleventh service in Australia to be awarded the Rainbow Tick for LGBTI inclusive practice
- Established an annual Council presence at Midsumma Festival Carnival to promote our support of the LGBTI communities
- Over 100 pieces of feedback were received from the LGBTI Communities which helped to inform the new Council Plan 2017-2021
- Consistently advocated to the Federal Government in support of Marriage Equality and the Safe School program
- In partnerships with Yarra, Moreland and Darebin Councils, developed an online map of LGBTI inclusive services and businesses called 'Find the Rainbow'
- Each year since 2014, Council has flown the rainbow flag over Council offices and hosted a party for the community to mark IDAHOBIT
- Developed a partnership with the Montmorency Traders Association to deliver the QWere St Party which celebrates diversity in the local community.

LGBTI Advisory Committee

The members of the second term of the Banyule LGBTI Advisory Committee were appointed in January 2017 and will hold their positions for a period of two years. The Committee includes residents, community leaders from our LGBTI communities, local services and organisations.

Aim:

The aim of LGBTI Advisory Committee is to provide Council with advice and information on inclusion, access and equity, issues facing the LGBTI communities and on the development and implementation of Council's LGBTI Plan 2017-2021.

Objectives:

- Provide feedback and advice to Council on its policies, plans and services that impact LGBTI communities
- Consider and provide advice on key Government initiatives, programs and reviews that impact on LGBTI communities
- Advocate on behalf of LGBTI communities
- Consider funding and other opportunities as they may arise
- Assist Council to promote the benefits of diversity and enhance understanding about the barriers to equality facing LGBTI communities
- Provide advice to Council in relation to its communication, engagement and consultation with LGBTI communities.

Development of the Plan

The LGBTI Plan 2017 – 2021 has been informed by a number of research and consultation steps, including:

- Review of relevant National, State and local policy and plans
- Community engagement with stakeholders
- Evaluation of the LGBTI Plan 2014 – 2017.

Legislative and Policy Context

This policy review is not comprehensive and Council Officers will continue to monitor the Federal and State policy agenda for relevant information.

International Context

- United Nations, Yogyakarta Principles 2011

Australian Government Context

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- Commonwealth Laws
 - Same Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws – Superannuation) 2008
 - Same Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws – General Law Reforms) 2008
 - Fair Work

Victorian Government Context

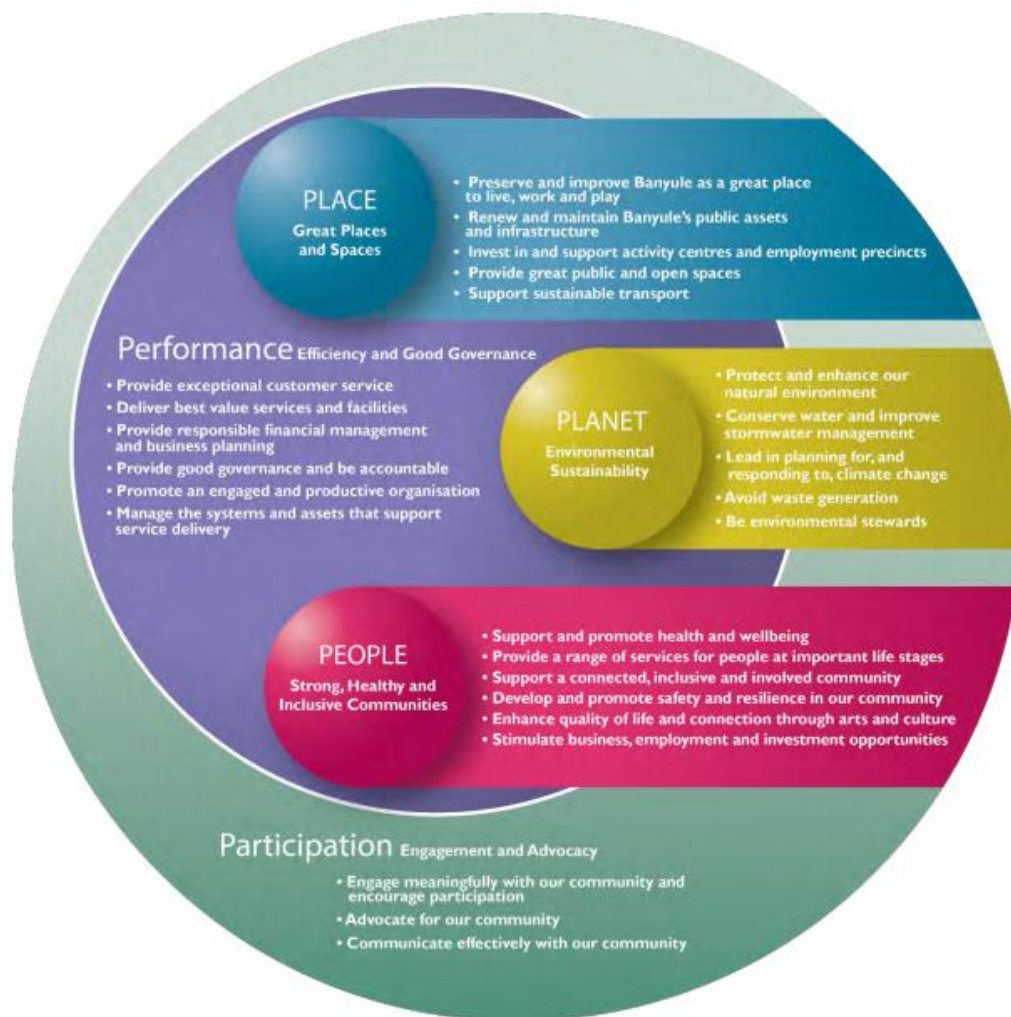
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- Relationships Act 2008
- Statute Law Amendment (Relationships) Act 2001
- Statute Law Further Amendment (Relationships) Act 2001

Banyule City Council Context – links to Council Plan

The purpose of Council's Plan 2017-2021 is to set the strategic direction for Council responsibilities over this four year period. It establishes the vision, objectives and key directions guiding Council's work under five themes which are People, Planet, Place, Participation and Performance. It outlines priorities and helps guide the services that we provide to the community.

The LGBTI Plan is in line with the Council Plan 2017-2021, it directly links to the People and Participation objective and key direction.

The following diagram gives an overview of Council's objectives and key directions.



Demographics of Our LGBTI Communities

Banyule's estimated resident population for 2016 is 127,693, with the population forecast to grow to 148,095 by 2036.

In the 2016 Census, 221 couples reported living in a same-sex relationship in the municipality (123 female same-sex couples and 98 male same-sex couples). It should be noted that this does not represent the total LGBTI community. This is because Census data does not identify LGBTI persons that are not in a relationship or the whole spectrum of LGBTI. In addition, single parent families, lone person households and group households are not considered. The Census numbers should therefore be considered an under-count of the LGBTI community in Banyule.

Community Engagement

The following information has come from community engagement opportunities which took place in 2017 with the Advisory Committee and other residents, in particular LGBTI residents.

Visibility and recognition within the Banyule community through flying the flag (both rainbow and Transgender) and having a LGBTI presence at festivals and events were regularly raised actions Council could do to support LGBTI communities. A lack of recognition can result in not feeling welcome in the community and can lead to individuals and families feeling that they need to hide aspects of their life.

Residents felt that Council could further demonstrate its organisational commitment to inclusion through actions such as staff training, an inclusive presence on the Council website, publications and social media and by “getting language right” in relation to LGBTI topics.

Difficulty in knowing which services and businesses are LGBTI friendly was raised. An example is knowing if a health care provider is inclusive and able to provide non-discriminatory and welcoming services.

Consultation with LGBTI young people have found that they have the same interests and needs as all young people. In their spare time they want to listen to music, participate in sport, dance, gaming and socialise. They did identify LGBTI challenges in the school environment and the fear that “once LGBTI young people leave school they lose their support networks and do not have opportunities to develop new ones unless they go to university where they have facilitated diversity groups”.

There is a need for social networking opportunities, especially for young people, rainbow families and transgender communities. The sharing of information about what already exists could be facilitated through Council. Difficulty in making connections with others from the LGBTI communities due to limited visibility and exposure can lead to social isolation and limit participation.

A lack of LGBTI bookshops locally was also identified. This could be an area for the Plenty Valley Library Service to further investigate its role in providing LGBTI literature.

Presenting Issues

Council acknowledges that some members of our community experience lower levels of health and wellbeing, community participation and economic participation than other members of the community. This is due to a range of factors that are discussed within this Plan. While some members of our LGBTI community experience barriers to health and wellbeing that need to be addressed, this Plan also builds on the positive contribution that our LGBTI communities make. Council is proud of its diversity and sees it as an asset to be harnessed.

The LGBTI Plan provides the vehicle by which Council will improve wellbeing and participation for members of our community.

Health and Wellbeing: Good health is the state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease. Health and wellbeing can be supported at any age through individual and public policy measures. Wellbeing is fundamental to quality of life, quality of human relationships and the capacity to participate in education, work, recreation and the community. Banyule City Council is committed to improving the health of our community and identifying and minimising threats to public health.

Community Participation: The opportunity to participate in community life is a fundamental right of a democracy. Some groups within the Banyule community experience barriers in being involved fully in community life due to a range of factors including the negative and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes of others. Banyule City Council strives to be a city that values diversity and actively promotes and enables the inclusion of all residents in the life of the community.

Economic Participation: Accessing economic opportunities and having the capacity to participate in the economy are important contributors to people's overall wellbeing. Fulfilling economic potential can increase resilience to change and provide a strong foundation for increasing the robustness of other wellbeing factors, such as mental and physical health. Banyule City Council is committed to supporting people to achieve their economic potential.

Health of LGBTI communities

The following section of the Plan outlines a range of the presenting issues and needs of Banyule's LGBTI communities. Many of the issues faced by LGBTI communities are shared across other local government areas and indeed broadly across Victoria and Australia. The issues and needs outlined provide useful background information that underpin the strategies that Council will use to support our LGBTI communities.

While most people from the LGBTI communities have healthy, happy lives, a large number experience worse health and social outcomes than their non-LGBTI peers. In areas such as mental health, suicide and alcohol and drug use the LGBTI communities are more at risk. It should be noted that being LGBTI is not a risk factor in itself. Instead it is the impact of homophobia and a number of other social prejudices which marginalise, isolate and exclude certain sections of LGBTI communities which result in poorer health and participation outcomes.

Council recognizes that LGBTI communities are not a homogenous group and the lived experiences of people from the LGBTI communities are varied and diverse. However it is well documented that many people from the LGBTI communities continue to experience stigma and discrimination that can lead to a variety of negative health outcomes.

While much of the discrimination LGBTI people face is similar, there are also different challenges, notably for lesbian, gay and bisexual people on the one hand, and transgender and intersex people on the other, but also for each specific group.

Issues that affect intersex people are not necessarily the same as those that affect transgender people, or for that matter gay, lesbian or bisexual people. Bisexual people may have experiences that differ from those of gays or lesbians. It is important when addressing discrimination that these different experiences are recognized.

The Impact of Discrimination and Homophobia

Homophobia and transphobia involves the fear and hatred of those from the homosexual and transsexual/ transgender community. Homophobia and transphobia can be manifested in many different ways including overt verbal and physical abuse through to more hidden prejudice, discrimination and fear. Regardless of what form it takes homophobia and transphobia damages individuals and communities.

The prevalence of ongoing discrimination and marginalisation on the basis of sexuality and sex and gender identity directly affects the health and wellbeing of many LGBTI people. Its effects are well documented and include poorer health outcomes, reduced social participation and engagement, and avoiding or delaying seeking care because of actual (or fear of) prejudice.¹ There are strong links between experiencing homophobic abuse and feeling unsafe and unwelcome which can lead to excessive drug use, self-harm and suicide attempts.

¹ *Well proud - A guide to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex inclusive practice for health and human services, Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Health and Wellbeing, 2011.*

Inclusion Access and Equity Framework

The LGBTI Plan has used Banyule's Inclusion Access and Equity Framework (IAEF) which identifies five goals for our diverse communities. These goals describe what we aim to achieve and the broad outcomes we are looking to support for our LGBTI communities.

1. Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.

This strategy focuses on how we work with our own staff and organisation, and on our own services to respond to the needs of diverse communities. It is Council's desire that the services we provide, and the way we work as an organisation, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of our community.

Intended Outcomes: People do not face barriers in using Council services, facilities and activities.

2. Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address service gaps.

This strategy focuses on how we work with other key service providers to try and make sure our diverse community has good access to relevant services that are inclusive.

Intended Outcomes: People do not face barriers to accessing local services and opportunities.

3. Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved community life.

This strategy focuses on building the capacity of individual community members and communities to assist them to lead local solutions.

Intended Outcomes: Diverse communities are resilient and engaged in community life.

4. Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities.

This strategy focuses on how we work to increase support and develop wider community understanding, appreciation and pride regarding our diversity.

Intended Outcomes: The community values diversity and there is reduced prejudice.

5. Advocate on behalf of and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.

Many of the issues facing our community are outside of the direct control of Council. This strategy is about how we advocate on issues that impact on our local community, for issues beyond Council or the local community's direct control.

Intended Outcomes: Peoples rights are protected and promoted.

These goals will be progressed through the development of an Action Plan.

Implementation and Action Plan

The Implementation Plan outlines the strategies to be implemented over a four year period to achieve each of the goals. The Action Plan will be considered on a regular basis as part of the Council's annual budget process. It will identify new and innovative actions happening across Council Departments. It will not list all actions Council does to support our LGBTI communities.

Goal	Strategies implemented over four years
<p>1. Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.</p> <p>Intended Outcome: People do not face barriers in using Council services, facilities and activities.</p>	Implement staff education and awareness training
	Promote and improve access to public meeting places that support our diverse communities
	Offer services, facilities and opportunities that enable equal access and participation and reduce potential for isolation and exclusion. This includes supporting equal access to civic participation
	Develop and promote inclusive employment practice
	Improve communication and access to information through the use of a broad range of communication mediums
	Review Council forms, publications and website to be inclusive and reduce potential for isolation and exclusion
	Improve Council's communication processes by using inclusive language, content and imagery that represents our diverse communities
<p>2. Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address services gaps.</p> <p>Intended Outcome: People do not face barriers to accessing local services and opportunities</p>	Support local services and groups to engage with our diverse communities and increase community harmony
	Work in partnership with community groups, sporting clubs and organisations to ensure equal access for our diverse communities
	Promote the provision of health services and practices that cater for our diverse communities
	Support and promote initiatives that showcase the positive contribution that our diverse communities make to economic participation through employment and businesses

Goal	Strategies implemented over four years
	Work with local services to encourage equitable employment opportunities
3. Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved community life Intended Outcome: Diverse communities are resilient and engaged in community life.	Support and recognise businesses that show initiative and good practice in including our diverse communities
	Support local services and groups to engage with and provide welcoming environments for our diverse communities to increase community harmony
	Support our diverse communities to access funding and other opportunities as they may arise.
4. Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities. Intended Outcome: The community values diversity and there is reduced prejudice.	Ensure Banyule's events calendar celebrates our diverse communities and considers the diversity in their planning and delivery
	Acknowledge and promote the contributions from our diverse communities
	Support and promote events and activities that celebrate cultural events and diversity, for example Pride March
	Develop communication initiatives and projects that promote the contribution of our diverse community, target discrimination and promote anti-racism messages
5. Advocate on behalf on and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage. Intended Outcome: People's rights are protected and promoted.	Extend and enhance partnerships, projects and advocacy efforts that address the needs of our diverse communities
	Develop partnerships, projects and advocacy efforts that address the needs of our diverse communities

Evaluation and Review

The LGBTI Plan includes a range of strategies that are organised under the five IAEF goals. The goals and strategies are relevant for the four years of the LGBTI Plan. Each year there will be a set of actions developed that respond to the strategies.

Within Council, the implementation of the LGBTI Plan is the primary responsibility of the Community and Social Planning Department. The Banyule LGBTI Advisory Committee will assist by providing advice regarding the implementation of the Plan.

In 2018 further work will be undertaken to refine the evaluation approach and measures for the plan.

Conclusion

Banyule is a diverse community, made up of people from many different cultures, beliefs, abilities and identities. This diversity enriches and improves the Banyule community. Banyule City Council has a commitment to its diverse communities which is guided by the IAEF. The LGBTI Plan 2017 – 2021 provides the vehicle by which Council will improve wellbeing and participation for members of our community.

Further Information

For further information regarding Banyule's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan or any of the other plans under the Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework go to <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Services/Diverse-Communities-and-Social-Inclusion>

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Appendix

1. Terminology and Language²

Terminology and language can impact on a person's identity, self-worth and inherent dignity. The use of inclusive and acceptable terminology empowers individuals and enables visibility of important issues. Terminology in this area is at times contested and changing and there is not often clear consensus on what is appropriate terminology.

While recognising these limitations, it is important to provide clarification around some of the terminology used.

Gay refers to a person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex. The term is most commonly applied to men, although some women use this term.

Gender refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity (their deeply held internal and individual sense of gender) or gender expression (how a person externally expresses their gender or is perceived by others) is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of identity defined in relation to the categories male and female. Some people may identify as both male and female while others may identify as male in one setting and female in other. Others identify as androgynous or intersex without identifying as female or male.

LGBTI is an internationally recognised acronym used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (at times with the addition of 'queer' – an umbrella term including a range of alternative sexual and gender identities) collectively.

Heterosexism refers to the belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that other types of nonheteronormative sexualities or gender identities are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society. Heterosexism includes both homophobia and transphobia (see below) and a fear of intersex people who challenge the heterosexist assumption that there are only two sexes.

Homophobia is the fear and hatred of lesbians and gay men and of their sexual desires and practices.

² Terminology has come from the Victorian Ministerial LGBTI Advisory committees Well Proud (2011) report and the City of Darebin's Sex, Sexuality and Gender Diversity Plan (March 2012).

Intersex refers to people who have genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics that are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex.

Lesbian refers to a woman whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards other women.

Same-sex attraction refers to an attraction towards people of one's own gender. The term has been used particularly in the context of young people whose sense of sexual identity is not fixed, but who do experience sexual feelings towards people of their own sex.

Sex refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female. Some people identify as neither male nor female.

Sex and gender diversity, which includes various 'sex and gender identities', refers to the whole spectrum of sex and/or gender in our community.

Transgender refers to a person who does not identify with their gender of upbringing. The terms male-to female and female-to-male are used to refer to individuals who are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender affirmation (see Transsexual).

Transphobia refers to the fear and hatred of people who are transgender/transsexual.

Transsexual refers to a person who is making, intends to make, or has made the transition to the gender with which they identify.

SSAGD (or SSASGD) is another term aiming at encompassing the variety of the LGBTI communities is for same-sex attracted and gender diverse (or same-sex attracted and sex and gender diverse). The term SSAGQ (same-sex attracted and gender questioning) is sometimes used, notably with younger people.